

# The Birth of Modern Capitalism

By F. W. MOORE

A tragedy in three acts, being the 1851-16 annual report on progress by Satan at the congress of princes of the infernal regions subsidiary to the planets Venus, Earth, and Mars.

## Dramatis Personae

Satan, King of the infernal regions.  
 Beelzebub, Prince of devils.  
 Madame Capital, daughter of Pluto.  
 Mr. Reactionary, an alias of Beelzebub.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Trust, relations of Madame Capital.  
 Miss Credit, daughter of Mephisto.  
 Midas, whose touch turns everything into gold.  
 Mr. Ed. U. Kashion, the intermundane wizard of educational jugglery.  
 Miss Kashion, his sister, who is powerful in the educational circles of the nether world.  
 Archbishop Churchianity, primate of the universe and diabolical moulder of ecclesiastical thought.  
 Miss Churchianity, his daughter, cousin of Beelzebub.  
 Madame Eve O'Lution, who hurls her anathemas at the whole crowd.

## Act I. Scene 1.

Satan, addressing the princes of Hell.

Your Royal Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen, on rising to present you with the report on progress concerning the temptations of men for the years 1815-16 I have great pleasure in announcing the fact that in it is recorded the most phenomenal success of our numerous infernal organizations situated respectively on the planets Venus and Mars (we shall refer to Earth later) so that with machine guns, poison gas, liquid flames and disease germs, men did periodically slaughter their fellows by the million to our great and endless amusement; also, that various foul and loathsome diseases, which were universally prevalent hitherto, have within the last five years increased 40%, and that, evidently, owing to your unexampled ability in leading men astray; furthermore, that apart from these misfortunes, the circumstances attending their daily round of toil, have forced a state of misery and wretchedness that is well calculated to retard the normal evolution of the race. We all know that there are myriads of unrecorded instances of penury and starvation directly attributable to anarchy in production, of which you are the patron deities; yet I warn you that our day is fast drawing to a close, and that if these crazy humans get to understand the potential benefits involved in international brotherhood, our game will straightway be ended. Therefore, you will make most of your time and delay that dreadful possibility by every means in your power. When you have done this, it will be diabolically impossible to do more.

There is, however, one section of the solar system whose tempter has not furnished those thrills that up to the present have been characteristic of his past operations: his deviltries have become monotonous, stale, flat, and unprofitable. There is no doubt that innocent young fiends just imported by St. Peter, might be tempted to laugh at the screams of burning victims of Central African witch-doctors, or smile at the crude attempts of wholesale homicide in the Napoleonic wars. They might even enjoy the pathetic sight of a few thousand women champions of nationalism weeping their weary hours away because their sons and husbands were killed in vindicating the principles that their wives and mothers advocated. There is a certain amount of attraction for them in assassinations, intrigues, subornations, unnatural vices, or political charlatany but you all know that such trifling offences pall on experienced devils and are only fit amusement for our tender-hearted female friends—Beelzebub! hast thou not charge of that circuit in which is situated the planet Terra, and hast thou not monotonously continued thine unimproved temptations for a thousand years at least? Dost thou not think it is high

time to look to thy reputation lest, peradventure, it be our disagreeable duty to appoint a more worthy specimen of a damned soul to thy place?

Beelzebub: Sire, the homogeneity of my deviltry on Terra over so long a period, has not been altogether satisfactory even to myself: indeed, I had already begun to be tired of watching the wretched antics of burning witches and dying warriors; to such an extent was this the case that I have already planned the introduction of a system of race torture that for remorseless and relentless persecution is bound to please the most fastidious imp that ever breathes the flames of hell. But, blast it all, Your Highness, I cannot resist the logical conclusion that if I put it in force, we shall, as our Shakespeare used to say, "get hoist with our own petard;" nevertheless, I am inclined to trust to chance to kill its good, and foster its bad effect since, in the evil involved, we shall have a couple of centuries, more or less, of diversion that will make our oldest torturers, whom long use has rendered nonchalant, once more experience that old-time joy in life; once more make the welkin ring with roars of Mephistophelean laughter.

Satan: Art thou sure Beelzebub that too much heat hath not unduly expanded thy brain—Of what nature is this race torture?

Beelzebub: It will, Your Highness, be inflicted by a woman with whom I am madly infatuated, Madame Capital by name, although, to tell the truth my affections are not reciprocated. She loves, in a very materialistic way, one Mammon, who is to me a very dear friend; therefore, I am not jealous. It is a case of the eternal triangle, with this difference, that each one can indulge his or her passion without in the least being conscious of any offence to the other.

Satan: Has this lady passed over the Styx, or is she still on Terra?

Beelzebub: That's just it, Your Highness, She's a Terrestrial, and therefore only a child, although a very apt child in what on Terra they call "committing sin." That is to me her chief attraction. I shall be enraptured with her acts merely with what I can tempt her to do to her fellow humans.

The object of her love, on the other hand is a real personage—a world-famed regal procurer by the name of Mammon to whom millions of the human race will sell their souls and prostitute their individualities until all are debased sufficiently to tolerate the presidency of my sweetheart as a grand Madame in the tenderloin environment of a mechanical world.

Satan: Ha, ha, ha, h-a-a-a-a-a—I get you. The word "mechanical" is intensely expressive, you fiery old fossil. It was just such a system that was incidental to the marvelous success of the diabolical operations on Mars and Venus referred to in my opening address. There is danger to it, as you say, but keep the people economically ignorant; keep them interested in Latin or Greek; in history especially—history that is a defecation of kings and generals. Get books on political economy written, but make them as inexplicable as a Chinese puzzle and you have a basis for cycles of the most interesting fiend-craft imaginable. (Exit Satan and princes)

Beelzebub (alone) Well, well, well, I certainly made a hit that time—"a very palatable hit" as my old friend Shakespeare used to say. I must now bid me hence and indulge my fiendish longing for an interview with Madame Capital.

## Act I. Scene 2

Exit Beelzebub, who next appears at the office of Madame Capital who knows him under the name of "Reactionary."

"Delighted to see you," was her greeting in response to the butler's announcement.

Mr. Reactionary (taking a chair), I just dropped in to talk to you about our old friend, Madame Eve O'Lution.

Madame Capital: Oh I detest that talkative woman!

Reactionary: How delightful so do I. She's a dangerous person, well known and feared by our comrades on Mars and Venus. She not only inspires capitalists to introduce machinery on a large scale but fills the workers on these machines with the idea that to avoid anarchy in production they must eventually own them. She demonstrates to their satisfaction that competition, which is inevitable and incessant, must eventually thrust the ownership of the earth into the hands of a few monopolists.

This, she continues, ought to be the grand condition looked forward to by capitalists and socialists alike: "for," says she, "on the day that the wealth of the world is concentrated in sufficiently few hands to induce universal hardships through unemployment, or to constitute a constant menace of disastrous war, the hour has struck for the birth of the new social order."

Thus did Madame Eve O'Lution analyse the future of capitalism, and I cannot, without stultifying my powers of reasoning, deny the scientific value of her statements.

Do you know that industry gets developed, and ever larger trusts emerge from the process, that labour must necessarily become socialized? Do you know that the skilled mechanic must be reduced to the level of the common labourer?

Do you know that the term "common labourer" must necessarily embrace women and children who can attend to certain kinds of machinery just as efficiently as the strongest men?

And, lastly, do you know that the whole class of laborers will be reduced by the necessity of mechanical development, to one common level of social importance? They are, even now, awakening to a consciousness of their class position in society. It is up to us to use every means in our power to keep them in the dreamland of fancy which has been their heritage for generations.

Miss Capital: But how can we work such a miracle?

Reactionary: Oh, that's easy. Get more complete control of the schools, the pulpit, and the press, and the world will be ours for a long time to come. No institution can exist now-a-days without money, and our class, Miss Capital, knows no scarcity of that.

Miss Capital: Mr. Reactionary, you are a genius. The logic of the situation will appeal to the whole commercial world.

## Act II.

Afternoon tea at the bishop's palace, seated in the drawingroom are: Mr. and Mrs. Trust, Miss Capital, Mr. Reactionary, Mr. Ed. U. Kashion, Bishop Churchianity and Miss Credit.

Miss Capital addressing Mr. Trust, talking about the feeling of separateness that is beginning to evince itself amongst factory hands; this "class consciousness" as the Reds are in the habit of putting it, is a mental disease due to suggestions from the radical element that is present in small numbers in all factories. We must save the people from insidious doctrines of that kind, and there is only one way we can save them: We must influence them mentally, just as the Reds do.

Mr. Trust: But surely we owe it to the position of our patrons in society to avoid making it necessary for them to expose themselves on soap-boxes.

Miss Capital: Oh dear, yes; there is no need to oblige them to forfeit their dignity in that ungainly manner. We must control the press, the schools, and the pulpit. We must train the mass-mind and create in it our own special psychology. We must adjust our ethical standards to the exigencies of modern industrial development.

This will not be so difficult as it at first appears since the common people prefer our bourgeois papers to their own and that being so the natural thing

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